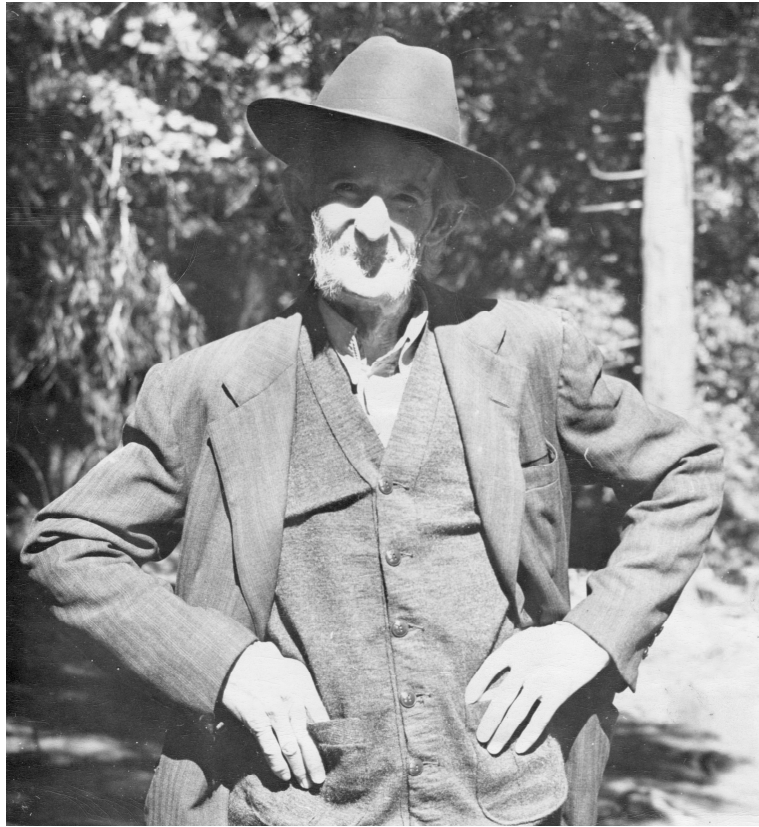


## **Bob Asher, Palomar, 1901**

### **Robert Haley Asher**



**Robert Haley Asher, September 9, 1945**

Robert Haley Asher was born 28 March 1868, to Josephus Marion Asher, who was the first commercial nurseryman in the San Diego area, providing buyers with fruit trees, shrubs, & vines from his Fruit Vale ranch in Paradise Valley, National City. Robert Asher settled on Palomar Mountain in 1903, and ultimately had 160 acres, living in the Pauma Creek / State Park area. Robert Asher also lived off Palomar Mountain part of the year working as a nurseryman among other things. On Palomar, Asher photographed summer campers, then developed and sold them photos; he also sold postcards off his photos, trapped animals for pelts, collected and sold wild plants, picked apples, and worked odd jobs. Asher moved off Palomar Mountain in 1946 to his sister Mrs. Josephine A. Vacher's place on Fuerte Drive in El Cajon and continued to visit Palomar Mountain until 1951. Asher passed away on 25 April 1953.

These digitized pages are from the Robert Haley Asher papers (held by Peter Brueggeman). When Josephine Vacher's son vacated the family house in El Cajon, the family gave Robert Asher materials at that location to Peter, due to his Palomar Mountain history interests. Digitization of these materials and posting them to the Internet Archive is intended to enhance and preserve access to these materials.

This memoir was written in June 1938, according to Asher's text. Its initial pages are missing.



B. Asher, Palomar. 1901

For as it had gone. So I had no photos to go with  
the proposed stories. Also I was bent on writing  
verse. And for the time I remained in Los Angeles  
I did try real hard. I used to sit around Central  
Park sunny mornings listening to the Park orators  
and getting ideas and working them out. But I  
couldn't make anything stick with the editors.  
My money nearly gave out at last, and I got  
back to San Diego while I still had enough to  
pay my fare.

pay my fare.  
Back to work again ~~in the garden~~ with the plants on Golden Hill, but my heart wasn't in the garden. It was getting toward summer, again the mountains were calling, calling, calling. I had stood off the call the past several summers on account of the garden. But now I had begun to think that the garden wasn't worth it. I had been seeing a good deal of Olie Bailey, son of Theodore O. Bailey, and hearing a good deal about Smith's Mountain. ~~Palomar, around the Y.M.C.A. and the First Baptist Church of which we both~~ members. Up to then I had never been on Palomar, although I had been all around it. I knew that Prof. Dunn, and old plant collector, had been collecting *Lilium Parryi* bulbs on the mountain for Carl Purdy of Ukiah, for whom I had also collected in past summers. So I wrote Purdy. Purdy had made arrangements for a supply of *L. Parryi* bulbs, but very much wanted bulbs of a "lost" lily. Also a clear yellow form of *Lilium Pardalium*, fragrant, which Dunn had secured a few in the Cuyamaca Mountain region. The idea struck me that the "lost" lily might be found.



on Smith Mountain. Also the hybrid *Pardisium*. I had ranged all over the Cuyamaca and Balcon Mountain years before, and had seen no sign of either of the now-desired lilies. So now the garden was deserted again. Through Ole Bailey I made arrangements for the trip to Smith Mountain with <sup>my</sup> father. Mr. Bailey stopped at a butcher shop in Esccondido to get a supply of beef and suggested that since I intended to board myself and camp out that I had better go along with him to the meat store. And lo and behold, there was Colonel T. J. Bryan of Lemon Grove for whom I had done much budding over of old citrus trees. Also there was Saml Gordon Fagle, leading hardware dealer of San Diego. Colonel Bryan introduced me to Saml Gordon, and the heads of them invited me to call on their respective families who were camping near the Fran Springs, and if possible to make my own camp near theirs, in fact to make myself at home there, just as I had been at home in the Bryan residence in Lemon Grove. Mr Bailey ably seconded the invitation, and offered to take me and my baggage down to the Fran Springs. He also volunteered to give me all the rhubarb I could eat. T. O. B. was always mighty proud of his rhubarb. Well, I stayed there about a month, living <sup>practically</sup> on rolled wheat mush and steamed rhubarb. I had no tent, so I made a little brush-covered shelter under a black oak tree in a choke-drawing



about 100 yards  
thicket ~~adjoining~~ west of the tents. ~~about~~ there were  
things going on of a social nature nearly every  
day or evening, but I did find time ~~to~~ to  
range about considerably, hunting for the  
lost birds, but I never found them.

d The evening camp fires were a great feature  
in those days. There were four "boys" in  
our camp, and it was our job to rustle up  
wood for the camp fire almost every day. This  
was an Iron Spring community affair. Some-  
times we would have the fire in our camp.  
Sometimes across the creek near the Dickson  
Camp. Sometimes we would go clear off the re-  
servation to Bailey's or Cleaver's. As a general  
thing Bailey and Cleaver were the "life" of the  
party. We would sit around the fire and spin  
yarns, or recite or sing solo or en masse - or  
work off some original verse. There were sever-  
al versifiers on the mountain. Either Cleaver  
or George Doane could turn a handy rhyme  
on short notice. Then there were the simple  
little old fashioned games like - "drap the  
handkerchief" and the like. One day Mr.  
Cleaver invited us all to a very special  
party on his place. The Cleaver Ranch was  
quite a distance from the Iron Spring Camp.  
~~There were a number~~ Neither Mrs. Bryan nor  
Mrs. Ingle nor Mrs. Ross <sup>could not go</sup> nor Mrs. Jackson  
Clever offered <sup>the use of his team and</sup> farm wagon  
to take care of Mrs. Ross, Mrs. Jackson and the  
youngsters, while Mrs. Ingle and Mrs. Ross could  
go in the Ingle outfit, a two-horse buggy. Well,



things went according to schedule, until the time  
~~came for folks to go home~~. Mr Cleaver did  
 his prettiest as host and the affair was voted  
 a complete success. He and his young man  
 who was staying with him at the time had  
 provided an ample supply of sticks and logs  
 for the camp fire. And so we had plenty of  
 light to see by until ~~we~~ <sup>and had hitched up the teams</sup> prepared to  
 start for home. Then, for the first time  
 that evening, we realized that it was a  
 dark night - a terribly dark night according  
 to the older ladies. So dark in fact that  
 Mrs Ross and Mrs Fugle had demurred on driving  
 home unaided. They were sure that it was so  
 dark that they would lose the road, or them-  
 selves, or something. Offers of assistance from  
 the younger generation did not meet with  
 approval. The two ladies were just dead sure  
 that anyone of us boys <sup>(we</sup> ~~who~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>hastened to</sup>  
 volunteer) would land the buggy in some con-  
 venient ditch at the first opportunity. Mr. Cleaver  
 gallantly offered to drive the Fugle team - his  
 young friend could drive ~~the Cleaver~~ <sup>his own</sup> outfit safely  
 if he, Cleaver, went on ahead in the buggy. The  
 offer was accepted with acclaim. ~~For the reason~~  
~~white, and folks proceeded to~~. It was all very  
 fine. Cleaver was the hero of the hour. His  
 young man was another hero. The boys - well,



(15)  
we were plainly out of it. We were nothing  
just tenderfeet. So we hit the road ~~foot~~  
apart, taking the shortest way home by way  
of the trail Bailey's Plumbago patch and the  
trail. It was, late, of course, so I went at  
once over to my chickens and crawled into  
the blankets - and peaceful slumbers.

In the morning, when I went over to the  
main camp, everybody wanted to tell me  
about it. It seems that the night before  
had been so very, very dark, that even  
Mr. Cleaver had been unable to keep the  
Ingle buggy in the road. Team and buggy  
and its three occupants had in fact gone  
over the bank in a steep place. No one  
injured. No special harm done, except a  
broken buggy pole. Cleaver and his young  
man had fixed it up again with baling  
wire - of which he always kept a supply  
in the jockey box of his wagon - and the  
folks had arrived home in safety. After  
hearing the story I went over to the buggy,  
Not, of course, to verify anybody's statements, but  
just out of curiosity. Also, Mrs Ingle had  
asked me to take a look at the pole with  
the idea of a permanent repair job. She didn't  
seem to hold baling-wire in very high re-  
gard - and we were a long way from the



(16)

Ingle home in San Diego, and many miles  
of up-hill and down-hill in between.  
I decided that the pole was a hopeless  
wreck and offered to provide a nice new  
oak pole. ~~The offer was~~ Mrs Ingle agreed  
that it might be a good idea, and gave me  
her blessing - and the camp ax. I then  
proceeded on the search for a straight  
young oak-tree of the proper size. I found  
nothing to suit me on our side of the fence,  
But on the other side, up the ridge to the  
west, in a fern patch, I spied something  
that looked promising. So through the barb-  
wire I scrambled. When I reached the  
tree I found that it was quite a bit larger  
than I had thought. But there was nothing  
else around at all possible, so I proceeded  
to chop the ~~thing~~ off about three feet above  
the ground. I had been alone, but just as the  
tree went down I heard a voice "Well, young  
man! What do you think you're doing?" I  
looked up, and there was Sylvester Mendenhall  
seated on his pony not 5 yards away! I hadn't  
realized until then that I was trespassing  
on Mendenhall property. I had been hearing  
plenty of talk about the terrible Mendenhalls.

(j)



(17)  
and what they did to folks they caught trespassing on the wide-spread Mendenhall domains. The least that I could expect was a terrific bawling-out. I was caught dead in the act. No telling how long he had been watching me. I couldn't very well run. His pony could outrun me twice over. There was no convenient gopher-hole for me to crawl into. Or any other hole. I felt so small that I could have crawled into a mouse-hole. "Well," repeated Sylvester, "What about it?" Now that was something reasonable, I could certainly <sup>tell</sup> about it - all about it. And I did - at length. Mendenhall patiently sat it out. Then - "All right" but what about that snag. It's dangerous. Cut it off even with the ground!" and he rode off.

(K)  
A few days later, Tommy Jackson and some other boys decided that a swimming pool was in order. A suggestion that there was a good <sup>place</sup> in the creek below the Iron Spring was promptly and firmly vetoed by Mrs. Bryan. Nothing daunted the boys betook themselves to the creek in Frye Flat and



(18)

there proceeded to throw a dam across the stream just below the old log cabin. I was not in on this scheme, but I heard plenty about it that evening. So the next day I went over to inspect the job. The boys were still busy on the dam and getting logs for a proposed bon-fire.

Pretty soon along came Sylvester on his pony. Reining up on the bank above the boys he called "What do you <sup>boys</sup> think you boys are doing?" "Building a dam for a swimming hole." <sup>answered Tommy Jackson.</sup> "Have you got permission from the owner?"

Tommy looked at his brother, and brother looked at Gordon <sup>angle</sup> and Gordon looked at me, and I looked back at Tommy. By that time Tommy had his alibi. "We couldn't find the owner, we looked in the cabin and he wasn't there."

(1) Sylvester seemed at a loss for proper words to meet this. "Oh well" he said at last. "I am the owner, I am Mr. Mendenhall. You can ask me now." We asked him as one man. "All right" he said, "But be careful about the fire. And you had better fix that dam. It's letting out too much water." And again he rode off.



I have written of the evening "camp-fires". But we also had many day-light gatherings. These were generally of limited extent, just folks from our own camps, with possibly visitors from "down-below". But once in a while came an affair that brought out the whole mountain. I remember faintly about one of these all-day gatherings. Mr. Theodore T. O. Bailey had invited our camp to be on hand and had asked me to deliver an address on behalf of the campers of the Iron Spring settlement. I immediately became very busy writing and rewriting. The time given me to prepare was limited but I did get up something and delivered it. In sorting over the material for this tale I have failed to find the final <sup>and copy</sup> draft of that address. But I did find part of one of the preliminary drafts and have attempted to put it in shape for inclusion in this volume.

Address  
1901

Date of  
N.Y.

we find J.M.A. Jr. writing from Utica



Asher's "address" - Palomar, July, 1900.

Friends and Fellow Citizens:

On behalf of the sojourners amid the groves and valleys of Palomar I wish to thank you for the welcome which your venerable poet has so beautifully extended to us. We appreciate it. Also the chickens and pies. Your trees and your flowers, your springs and your riverlets, your ozone-laden air, your — well — your rhubarb pies — have for us a tremendous fascination. Others may chant the praises of the seashore, but we prefer to sing of the deep blue sky, of the gentle breezes sighing in the lofty tops of cedar and pine. And as we play and dream beneath the swaying branches time slips by so softly and swiftly that the weeks seem but as days, and the time for parting comes all too soon.

Some of us have come to regain lost strength or health. Some for rest and recreation. Once in a while the sacred precincts of Palomar are invaded by an unblushing scientist, to whose



Flord in  
middle of  
cross street

Poetry is but rubbish, and the Poet a fool. However, although not up on Bugology, it seems to me that an entomological collector could spend months here to advantage. We could give him a fine start right in the Ingle - Bryan camp. Ants, especially. Your birds and your animals are interesting. Your flowers also. Amongst all the members of Queen Flora's retinue the Lily and the Violet are my favorites. I have not seen much as yet of your violets, but your lilies are certainly ~~beautiful~~ lovely. But we camper-folk have not come to Palomar to spend the whole time in sleeping and eating and drinking from Spring water - important though that may be. We came expecting to have lots of fun, and we are having it, too! Camp-fires and candy-pulls, Trips to the Monument and trips to the Falls. By the way - the trip to the Falls is splendid - if you don't fall into the water too often! It's wet! I know it is! A party of us went down there last Monday, and - well - about half of us are here - the others are drying off in Escondido. Later in the week we were down again with another party, and in the party was a young lady, a beautiful young



Lady, and, although she was a very young  
 young lady she had about as many admir-  
 ers as there were young men in the party.  
 Now, as you perhaps all know, there are a  
 number of large sycamore trees just above  
 Rainbow Falls. And carved on the ~~trunks~~<sup>bark</sup> of  
 the larger of the tree trunks there is a  
 great assortment of names and initials  
 and what not. After we had ~~rested from~~  
~~the trip down~~, and disposed of all the fried  
 chicken and rhubarb pie and cookies and  
 rested for awhile, the older folks started  
 up the creek saying something about it be-  
 ing a long, long way to the Iron Spring. But  
 the younger generation lingered for awhile.  
 Finally someone suggested that it would  
 be a fine idea for all of us to put our  
 names on record. So went to work - all of  
 us except our young young lady. One of the  
 boys noted this and offered to carve the  
 young ladies name on a tree. But she would  
 have none of it. She wasn't interested, that  
 is, in having her name carved in such an  
 easy place. And anyhow, she would like to  
 know if there was anything up in the tree.  
 How far up? Oh, about twenty feet. Various  
 knives clicked shut and went into various  
 pockets. But one special young man got



to the tree first and up he went — maybe about twenty feet. There were a lot of leaves up there, so we couldn't see what he was doing. We knew that he must be doing something. He was that kind. And he was there for maybe ten minutes. Then he slid down. "What did you see?" queried the young, young lady. "Oh, nothing!" and that was all she or any one else could get out of him. The old folks had been yelling for us to come on and hurry up — so up the creek we <sup>all</sup> scrambled — that is all but one. He just stuck around till the other folks were out of sight. Then he climbed the tree himself to take a look-see. Sure enough — there it was — three pairs of initials one above the other. The highest was the initials "E. L." — an old cut. Just below the E. L. were the initials "G. G." — also an old cutting. And below the "G. G." was a freshly-cut pair of initials — "B. W." — and around the "G. G." and the "B. W." was a freshly-cut outline of a heart. "G. G." and "B. W." inside of the encircling heart — ~~E. L. outside heart left outside in a cold~~, ~~cold~~ world while the initials E. L. were left high and dry and out in the cold. "Men may come and men may go, but" — finish it for yourself!



There was more to the "address", but the manuscript pages are missing and my memory fails. Did I or did I not work in some of my own verse. The "venerable Poet" referred to was Clark Cleaver, of course. I must have written glowing reports of the affair to my folks. Mother writes from El Cajon under date of July 7 '01. "My Dear Robert, your letter to Dorcas was enjoyed by all the family. You are having a gay time apparently. We shall begin to look for you home soon." Younger brother Jay writes from Utica, N.Y. July 15<sup>th</sup> '01. "Dear brother Robert? - Yours of recent date duly received. I am glad to hear that you are having a pleasant time. I should have been most pleased to hear - your (no doubt witty) witty witty reply speech in behalf of the campers! Was it all in prose - or did you manage to wring in some few lines - of your own most beautiful poetry?" - - - - The heat here is awful. The Con. is built of brick and is just like an oven - night and day - night and day alike. The awful heat has nearly taken the life out of my mortal body - Perhaps

The sage-  
amore tree  
may have  
gone down  
due the  
flood of  
March  
1906. Cer-  
tainly not  
later than  
the smashing  
floods of  
1916.



this is a foretaste of my future state—  
tho' I do hope not—! Be a good boy  
Robt. Write soon once more some more.  
Fair well— I must refrain— until some  
future period— Your loving bro. —Jay—"

Can you imagine it? Brother Bob having  
the time of his life on old Palomar. Cool  
nights under the stars. Days— even the  
warmest— comfortable in the shade of  
the alders and firs. Poor Jay!

I find some scraps of scribbings of that  
summer. Here is something that got written  
by some body at the Cleaver residence.  
Young man there named Carney as I remember  
it.

"Now Mr. O. Carney, just cut out the blarney  
and let my biscuits alone!"

Said Carney to Cleaver

"you gay old deceiver!"

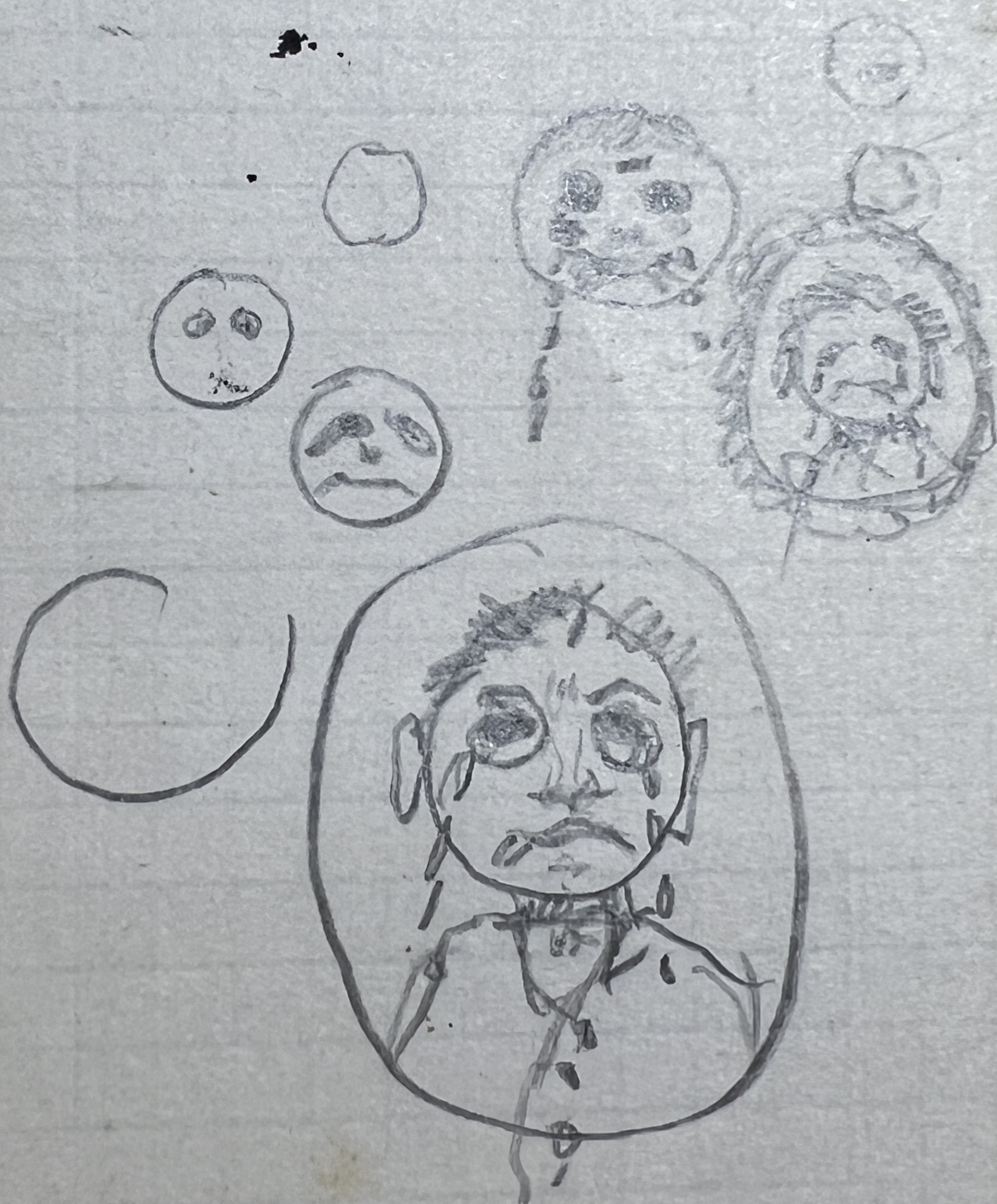
"Aint Mr O' Cleaver a gay old deceiver?"

Said Carney under his breath— I'll bet  
a cookie to a doughnut. That he's tick-  
led nearly to death!"











view of Review  
July 1844, Page 100

When an "intense" syphilis  
is approaching its  
critical state its  
molecules are in a con-  
dition of very unstable  
equilibrium, & the sudden  
commencement of a mercurial  
treatment frequently brings  
matter to a climax  
and induces intense  
corditis in India.  
Incise in vacuum.

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(27)

July or August 1901, will be charged for at the rate of Ten cents per thousand gallons San Diego Flume Company.

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From San Diego, July 22, 1901, ~~Leland Richey~~ writes: "Dear Sir: I would like to state that you owe me five dollars (\$5.00) which you promised to pay me over a month ago, and as I have not received it yet, I wish you would please call at 3328 K. St. and pay it, and oblige yours (signed) Leland Richey."

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This letter of Richey's was addressed to me at La Mesa. The Flume Company's notice also plainly had to do with the La Mesa orchard. So I must have made the switch from ~~San Diego~~ the Golden Hill garden before my first trip to Palomar. After the return from Los Angeles I decided to try my hand at the real estate business. But the only opening I could find was in the rental department of a 6th Street real estate firm. One day while I was still busy getting up my list of ~~rentable~~ houses to rent a man came in with the description of an orchard property <sup>of which</sup> he had recently ~~come~~ come



into possession, An old bearing lemon orchard at La Mesa Springs. He was so anxious to sell - on account of other interests - that he would give full deed without any down payment. Purchaser could pay out of profits on crops - or sell at a very handsome advance and pay out. I was the one who bit. I had had a good deal of experience in orchard work. Had done much pruning of lemon trees etc. It looked like a cinch. I had no idea at the time that the orchard was so very much run down that it would take years of care to bring it back into bearing condition, or that a series of dry years was then upon us, that the Home Company would have to pump and charge 10 cts per 1000 gallons - and at times could furnish no water at all, or that lemons would be a drag on the market for the next several years.

But there were other letters that July. Mrs. Ross wrote from Nellie California. July 22, 1901. Mr. Robert Asher. Dear Friend: According to agreement, I write to let you know that



the friend to whom we wrote about coming up here to be "man about our camp," writes us that he is unable to come, so we should be very glad to have you come if you can arrange to do so. -- The Jackson family leave tomorrow and Mr. Bryan may feel obliged to go also. All send kindest regards. Yours very truly,  
Ella P. Ross.

This was a very splendid offer. With the distractions of a camp full of young people I might have made some progress in the writing game. I knew that the duties of a "man of our camp" would not prove to be very onerous. And I was sure that Mrs. Bryan would be a very good boss. But the new lemon grove cried for attention. Also I would need money to keep things going and growing. So I did not return to Palomar again that summer. Another letter:--

Mr. Asher. Dear Sir, I write this hasty note as an emergency on behalf of a worthy citizen Mr. L. M. Ford who resides on "K" Street, I think, between 8th & 9th, S.D. opposite the German Grocery. Mr. Ford is quite advanced in life



and now in very feeble health. Quite unable to attend to his nursery. Could you make it convenient to call and see him with a view of assisting him make some disposition of his affairs. Mr. Ford is a worthy man and would greatly appreciate anything that can be done in his behalf. Hoping you may find it convenient to give your attention to this matter. I remain Yours Most truly  
W.A. Faddis.

Well, well. It never rains but it pours. I really cannot remember what I did to help Mr. Ford. I find that I have a lot of printed slips with various verses from his able pen. A retired newspaper man, he had started a plant nursery on the northwest corner of 8th and F. Streets - or maybe it was 9th. The lot was about 100 feet square and filled to overflowing with varieties of ornamental and blooming plants - all in tin cans. The boys used to call it "Ford's Tin-Can Nursery" - long before <sup>Uncle Henry's tin cans became famous</sup> ~~anyone had heard~~ of another Ford's tin-can autos. Mr. Ford did like to talk - and possibly yours truly did too - so we often had elegant little word feasts. Sometimes, if I was short of time, and had to be moving on - the old gentleman would continue shouting as long, almost, as I was in sight. On several occasions



Asher of Palomar. 1906.

30

he even followed me out into the middle of the street, and there held me until he could come at the end of what he had started to say and he <sup>certainly</sup> didn't like the liquor business! I may include one of his poems on the subject in this book. I would say that the verses are quite as applicable to present-day conditions, as they were when they were first published.

(Copy) Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1901. Robt. H. Asher, La Mesa, Calif. Dear Sir: --- I am much interested in your favor and the accompanying manuscripts. I am sorry that I cannot give you encouragement regarding your verse. While some of the stanzas are well done and have an easy and rollicking swing that appeals to me, I see that your trouble will be that you will write poems that are too long for editorial use. --- If you can do short, bright things of five or six stanzas there will be hope. Your prose is another matter. You start with a good free swing to tell your story --- and the story seems to be well worth the telling. The trouble here is that you do not confine yourself to literary standards. --- free use of blue pencil - hope that I may serve you to your advantage. Yours very truly, (Signed) James Knapp Reese.



## OUR COUNTRY'S PERIL

---

(As pointed out by many papers of  
today.)

Why alas! have we forsaken  
Ways our honored fathers trod?  
Why, ah! why, have we mistaken  
Mammon for our mothers' God?  
Shall we learn of Japanese,  
And rude tribes of southern seas?

Righteousness exalts a nation,  
And Jehovah leads aright,  
Those who shun the dire temptation,  
And in wisdom's ways delight;  
But if we His laws despise,  
In our path destruction lies.

Bacchus and old King Gambrinus,  
Are the foes we would dethrone;  
With strong cords they now entwine  
us,  
And their sway we gladly own;  
Shall we bow at Molock's shrine,  
Devotees of beer and wine?

If we serve the dread drink Demon,  
Slaves to lust and fiendish sports,  
Drunken boys will be our seamen,  
And the same will man our forts;  
Anarchy will rule the land,  
With a strong and gory hand!

College walls give no protection,  
While our hands are stained with  
blood;  
Ah! how few at each election,  
Dare to stem the rising flood!  
And our boys and girls are sold,  
Sold for votes by knaves controlled.

Cries we hear o'er plains and moun-  
tains,  
For our sons that go astray,  
Poisoned are the once pure fountains,  
By the Rumfiend of today!  
Tis a shame that saintly hands,  
Fill with woe all Christian lands!

Molocks have we cruel, gory!  
And insatiate foes I know;  
But the shrines of ancient story,  
Caused not half the blood to flow!  
~~Wealth and learning count for naught,~~ #  
While we serve this Juggernaut!

Tell us now ye hoary sages,  
When Columbia shall be free,  
From the curse that so enrages,  
And entails such misery?  
Hasten Lord the glorious day,  
When men vote as mothers pray!

L. M. FORD.

San Diego, May, 1900.

*#fame are dearly bought*



Now, was that letter of Mr. Reeves encouraging or wasn't it? As I write this in the month of June, 1938 my verse still cries in vain for a profitable market. And as for today's prose, anyone with half an eye can see that I have trouble confining myself to literary standards. Also, I am afraid that I shall always have trouble confining myself to any standard — there are too many things all around me of absorbing interest — too many things to do — different things — like painting pictures — and digging trails — and trying to start flower-gardens in Chupa Rosa Park — and — and — writing this book. But to return to 1901. W.H. Lous writes me under date of Oct 20, 1901. Mr Rob Asher, La Mesa, San Diego, Cal. Sir. In regard to those *Asparagus Plumosus* varus in those oil cans they are very poor and measly looking. I will take one dozen of them provided you will sell for <sup>the amount, six dollars and twenty cents</sup> two dollars and fifty cents per dozen. — Yours Respectfully  
(Signed) W.H. Lous. San Diego Palm Nursery.

So it seems that I still had a hold on the Golden Hill Black and had plants there.

Asparagus  
Poor +  
measly  
Lous



Now was six Dollars and twenty cents to be squeezed at. But hold - here's another letter from Laws dated Oct 25, 1901. ~~Sir. I'm~~  
~~Regard to those Asparagus Plumosus Names~~  
~~in those Oil cans~~ just five days later.

Mr. Robert Asher, Dear Friend. In reply to yours I will say that owing to certain circumstances having developed I am not able to purchase the ferns and pots at present. However I enclose you post Office money Order for the Boxes & Box Material, trusting that I may find things in shape later on that I may purchase the pots as I need them. Hoping ~~you~~ you are well I am yours Respectfully, W. H. Laws, 361 1/2 E. St. San Diego Calif. P.S. About one hundred boxes and some material \$1.15.

"One hundred boxes + some material" - for \$1.15! Lucky for Laws that he was not present when I pulled out that post Office money Order! But Laws wasn't such a bad chap. We were always good friends. He had a horse and light wagon which



photo of  
Laurel  
and  
buddy

he would load up with potted plants each morning. He had a stand station on E Street just off Fifth Avenue, northwest corner next to the old 1st National Bank Building. He was something of a politician, too, and had considerable influence with the colored brethren.

~~Peace be to his ashes!~~

On August 22, 1901, <sup>the former owner of the La Mesa place</sup> "M", as I shall call him hereafter, writes from Pasadena.

Robert Asher, La Mesa, Cal. Dear Sir: Not having heard from you since leaving San Diego that I should like to know how you are getting along and what the fruit prospects are. I also wish to know your price on the place if you wish to sell. -- party has eastern property which he wishes to trade for such a place." On the 25th he again writes: "Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your favor of the 24<sup>th</sup>. Will say that I am not in a position to make you an offer for the place, and in fact I don't think there is anything to the proposition. The party who wrote me from Colo --- describing a property which no



Profit  
of  
\$5000.00

one would want. -- I am sure that I shall be pleased if you were to make \$5000 out of the deal. Hope you may. .... I am sorry you did not have a big crop to take off from the place this season so as to get the benefit of the good prices. All the place needs is care and it will pay well. With best wishes for your success I remain, yours truly."

\$10000.00  
Profit

Now, that was nice - that about me making \$5000 out of the deal. I had been thinking about \$1000 for my interest in the place. That's what M had been saying I ought to get for taking care of the Ranch for a few months. The deed to me was a mere matter of form. I was to make a lot if the place were to be sold - and in the meantime I would clean up a nice sum every month or six weeks from the lemons I would market - to say nothing of the oranges. I can see now that the object of these and other "gollying" letters was to make me stick to the place - not throw it up in disgust, as I was very much inclined



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to do more than once even at that time. The trees were large, they were in a fairly healthy condition, they needed fertilizer and plenty of it to force them into bearing. M. I had told M. in the beginning that we would need fertilizer - that I was practically without means - and he had intimated that he would help me out in this direction. But the help consisted mostly of kind words - and I couldn't pass the kind words along to the dealer in fertilizers with any hope of getting what I needed. However, at I still had faith in M.'s good intentions, and I did the best I could under the circumstances.

On Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 1901, M. again writes: Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your favor and glad to know that everything is all right on the ranch. Do not know what I can do to help you on the flower proposition but will do the best I can and let you know." As I remember it, I had become uneasy over the prospect - or rather, lack of prospect - of the fruit crop for the coming summer and been thinking of planting something between



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the tree rows to help me solve the problem of how to get money to pay for water etc, to say nothing of living expenses. Work on the outside, of a kind I could do, was simply non-existent. I learned afterward that certain ~~partys~~ people <sup>there</sup> living some distance from the ranch, had hoped to get the place at a big bargain on their own terms, and that when M came down from Pasadena to look things over he was smart enough to "catch on" to the little scheme - and he had given the schemers the go-by. I just happened to be the innocent victim - the interloper who had stolen the place away from those who should have had it.

And so we come to the end of the year 1901 - the <sup>first</sup> year I had ever set foot on the top of Palomar Mountain.

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